

September 11, 2013

Some documents have expiration dates

Question: *"When I went to the Embassy last week for my immigrant visa appointment, I was told that my Jamaican police certificate was expired and that I needed to obtain a new one. I don't understand what the problem is, because I sent the police certificate to the National Visa Center a year ago when they requested it. Why is the Embassy making me get a new one?"*

Many of the documents required to obtain an immigrant visa have expiration dates, and an individual must be issued a visa and travel before those dates pass. It may be that the documents you sent to the National Visa Center (NVC) have expired before it is time for your interview, or the documents might expire while you are waiting on additional documents after the initial interview. These documents have the following expiration dates:

- Medical exam results – six months from exam date
- Police certificates – one year from issuance date
- DS-230 immigrant visa application – one year from date signed

The U.S. Embassy encourages all immigrant visa applicants to carefully track the age of the documents listed above. If you notice that one of these documents is nearly one year old, you should take the necessary steps to replace it before it expires. If you do not remember to keep these documents current, the processing of your visa will be delayed and you will not be issued an immigrant visa.

Immigrant visa applicants also must remember that if they do not take any action relating to their visa application during a one-year period, they will have to repay the visa application fees and the security surcharge.

Lastly, individuals who receive an immigrant visa must travel to the United States before the expiration date listed on their visas. Normally your immigrant visa will be valid for six months from the issue date, but if one of the documents listed above expires before that date, your visa will be limited to the expiration date of the document. Individuals who fail to travel before the expiration date will be required to repay the visa application fees and security surcharge and obtain new documents in order to obtain a new visa.

For more information about immigrant visas, please visit our website at http://kingston.usembassy.gov/immigrant_visas.html.

